

Message Text

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11

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 NIC-01 DRC-01 /113 W

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R 221841Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 272

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 1760

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, BE

SUBJECT: TINDEMANS ASKED TO FORM GOVERNMENT

REF: BRUSSELS 1517, 1536

1. KING BAUDOUIN HAS ASKED FLEMISH SOCIAL CHRISTIAN DEPUTY LEO TINDEMANS, VICE PRIME MINISTER IN THE OUTGOING CABINET, TO TRY TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. TINDEMANS, WHO RECEIVED A RECORD 82,000 PREFERENTIAL VOTES IN HIS ANTWERP DISTRICT IN THE MARCH 10 ELECTIONS AND WHOSE PARTY INCREASED ITS POSITION FROM 67 TO 72 SEATS IN BELGIUM'S

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212- MEMBER CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, WAS THE LOGICAL FIRST CHOICE

AS POSSIBLE PRIME MINISTER. HE WAS NOMINATED HOWEVER, ONLY AFTER A WEEK OF SOUNDINGS BY THE KING'S INFORMATEUR, FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE. THE PERIOD OF SOUNDINGS SERVED TO PERMIT SOME REFLECTION ON THE ELECTION RESULTS AND TO AVOID AN IMMEDIATE SHOWDOWN BETWEEN TINDEMANS AND THE SOCIALISTS THAT MIGHT HAVE REDUCED TINDEMANS' CHANCES OF BECOMING PRIME MINISTER.

2. IN ACCEPTING APPOINTMENT AS FORMATEUR, TINDEMANS HAS NOT RULED OUT ANY PARTY OR ANY CONSTELLATION OF PARTIES AS POSSIBLE PARTNERS IN A NEW, MAJORITY GOVERNMENT, OR EVEN THE POSSIBILITY OF SOCIAL CHRISTIAN-LIBERAL MINORITY GOVERNMENT. NEVERTHELESS, MOST OBSERVERS CONTINUE TO EXPECT A SOCIAL CHRISTIAN-SOCIALIST COALITION EVENTUALLY TO EMERGE AFTER THE SOCIALISTS -- PROCEEDING ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT WITHOUT THEM IS NOT POSSIBLE-- HAVE TRIED TO WRING FROM TINDEMANS EVERY POSSIBLE CONCESSION IN FAVOR OF THEIR OWN PROGRAM, VIZ. PUBLIC CONTROL IN THE ENERGY SECTOR, PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN INDUSTRY, PLURALIST SCHOOLS, AND LIBERAL ABORTION LAWS. TINDEMANS, FOR HIS PART, MUST TRY TO MAKE A NON-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT AS CREDIBLE AN ALTERNATIVE AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO BRING SOCIALIST DEMANDS WITHIN LIMITS THAT HIS OWN PARTY CAN ACCEPT AND THAT DO NOT FORECLOSE SUPPORT FROM PARTIES OTHER THAN THE SOCIALIST. SUCH SUPPORT MAY BE NEEDED TO ENACT LONG PROMISED BUT STILL UNREALIZED LEGISLATION ON THE REGIONALIZATION OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTROL IN BELGIUM. STRAUSS-HUPE

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